



Informal Cowes Town Council meeting held on Thursday 31st May 2012
with representatives of Eurovia regarding the proposed
Asphalt Plant at Medina Wharf, Cowes.

Present: David Marsh (PDE Consulting)
Patrick Riley (Director, Eurovia)
Tracy & Tanya (Eurovia)

Cowes Town Councillors: Cllr Geoff Banks (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Linda Brown
Cllr David Jones (Chairman, CTC Planning sub-Committee)
Cllr Rebecca Macgregor
Cllr Jon Matthews
Cllr Roger Mazillius
Cllr Bob Robinson
Cllr Willie Sanderson
Cllr David Walters (Mayor)
Roger Hendey (Town Clerk)

Mr Riley gave a brief description of Eurovia as the biggest producer of asphalt in the UK. He mentioned that Eurovia ran an asphalt plant on the Thames Estuary (delivering aggregate by sea) but their presence in the UK was predominantly in East Anglia. It was his view that Medina Wharf was the only suitable site on the Island for the import of aggregates needed for the PFI contract. The landfill area was chosen as it was the furthest away from residential areas.

Mr Marsh stated that other sites had been considered but had been rejected for a number of valid reasons; this site had been chosen as it matched development needs with planning policy and it was zoned for industrial use; it was also adjacent to a wharf for the sea-borne import of aggregates. He explained that the production process at the plant was completely automated and sealed until loaded into HGVs, which were then covered to keep the asphalt hot.

Mr Marsh added that the environmental impact of the development had to be identified as a normal part of the planning process. Although the IW Council Planning Department had advised that no Environmental Impact Statement was required, the information required within an EIS had already been included within the application and had covered everything that would be necessary for an EIS.

He commented, broadly in line with Bill Murphy/Mike Gildersleeves' e-mailed letter of 28th May, as follows:

Landscape impact

- The site would be reduced in level by approximately 2m and the risings used to form screening embankments all in order to mitigate the visual impact.
- The total height of any structure would be a maximum of 17.5m (although the exhaust stack would be 1–2m higher).
- Banks (bunds) would be provided on 3½ sides of the site (for access purposes it was not possible to provide bunds on all four sides) with fencing and screened planting.
- Building would be coloured to blend with the surroundings.
- The plant build costs will be approximately 60% greater than a normal asphalt plant so as to incorporate as many beneficial features as possible.

Transport

- Worst case scenario with the PFI contract would mean a total of 32 lorry loads or 64 movements per day.
- The impact on the highway network would be minimal (3 loads per hour)

Noise

- There would be agreed locations around the site for noise monitoring.
- It is accepted that there would be noise emissions from the plant and machinery (loading shovel).
- There was only one loading shovel – it would not be fitted with reversing beepers but, to meet Health and Safety requirements, it would be fitted with reversing cameras or sensors.
- The plant would be designed to meet all acceptable standards including the screened bunds and fencing.

Dust

- It was accepted that dust particles would be emitted from the site although evidence had shown that the maximum drift was only 30m to 100m and the nearest residential property in Arctic Road was 600m away. The facility would be designed to cater for dust suppression and capture.
- The site would be run using natural gas and it would have to have an Environmental Permit.
- The site would slope towards the river with water being sprayed to catch dust which would flow down to an attenuation system.

Flood risks

- Not an issue

Ecology

- The Report from Natural England had confirmed they had no problem with the application.

Cultural heritage

- The site would not be visible from either Osborne House or Whippingham Church and would have no impact.

Although the application was for 24 hour, 7 day operation it was anticipated that most of the material would be produced between 7am and midnight.

- Foundation asphalt could be stored before laying for up to 10–12 hours
- Top dressing asphalt could only be stored before laying for 2–4 hours

Mr Marsh noted that none of the Statutory Consultees in respect of the application (namely Natural England, English Heritage, the Environmental Agency and the Health & Safety Executive) had raised any objections. However, Mr Marsh recognised that the Environment Agency in particular had made several points that needed to be addressed.

- Cllr Jones asked, given that the wharf was crucial to the successful operation of the plant, whether Eurovia owned or controlled the wharf; he also asked what measures would be put in place to mitigate the noise and dust created by the unloading and transporting the material from the wharf to the plant. Whilst Mr Riley accepted that PD Port Services owned the wharf (and could therefore offload barges at any time of the day or night) he confirmed that Eurovia would only undertake the secondary movement of materials from the wharf to the plant between 7am and 7pm.
- Cllr Jones made the point that the wharf was very close to a residential area and that it and the road to the plant was outside the area where noise and dust is controlled. Cllr Walters added the comment that, because of the tidal nature of the River Medina, there was a very small window in which to unload and that at times this will be during the night. In reply Mr Riley said the wharf was owned and controlled by PD Port Services and that PD Port Services already had planning permission to unload aggregate. The transport from the wharf to the site would be Eurovia's responsibility. Material would be unloaded at night, stored in the wharf area and transported to the plant during the day. The question of noise and dust was not, in the opinion of the Councillors present, completely answered.
- Cllr Banks asked whether the imported aggregate would be graded; the answer given was yes and that the crusher was solely to deal with imported road planings which would be small and measures would be in place to suppress the noise and, with bitumen already in the planings, there would be less dust. The crusher would only operate between 8am and 5pm on Mondays to Fridays. All the plant would be new with the possible exception of the crusher.
- Cllr Sanderson asked what happened to road planings now. The answer given was that they are used as road fill.
- Cllr Jones raised the question of coal tar, its carcinogenic properties, being present in older road planings. The answer given was that it would be dealt with by cold reprocessing, complying with accepted standards.
- Cllr Banks raised the question of natural screening. It was conceded that mature trees could not be successfully planted and that small plants will be used. Until these mature visibility will be reliant on the raised bank and fencing.
- Cllr Mazillius asked about the spread of dust estimated to be between 30 and 100 metres during windy periods which frequently occurred in the area. The response was that the control of dust would be by prescribed methods.

- Cllr Matthews also expressed concern about the noise and dust experienced by properties close to Medina Wharf. He also asked about the internal road from the wharf to the plant, particularly about the problems of dust. Mr Riley confirmed that dust suppression measures would be down to Eurovia - though it was felt that the response was too vague.
- Cllr Matthews made the point that the cost of building the Medina Wharf plant must be huge compared to using the site already in place on St George's Down, Blackwater. The response given was that the St George's Down plant was dependent upon the quarry being active for its Planning Permission - but it is close to being 'mined out'. To continue to produce asphalt there would require the quarry to remain 'mine-able'. It was further stated that Medina Wharf is an industrial brownfield site rather than a rural site and, as such, is treated differently under existing Planning Law.
- Cllr Mazillius asked about increased revenue for the owners of Medina Wharf. In reply Mr Riley acknowledged that increased traffic will increase PD Port Services' revenue.
- Cllr Sanderson asked about possible contamination and what will happen to material removed to lower the level of the site. Mr Marsh was confident that there was no contamination of the site and explained that material removed will be used to create the proposed banks.
- Cllr Linda Brown asked about their experience setting up other plants around the country. Mr Marsh, despite questions raised by the Case Officer, which all those present had had sight of, felt the consortium had submitted a robust technical application.
- Cllr Walters was concerned about the logistics of HGVs having to use the Cowes/Newport Road and Coppins Bridge. He felt that centrally based Bardon Vectis was a better place to serve all parts of the Island. Again the response was that, in the long term, planning consent for a quarry site was unlikely.
- Cllr Banks asked about health issues, particularly toxicity and carcinogens associated with the transport and production of asphalt. He cited the banning of such sites by some US States. Mr Riley's response was that there are no known harmful effects from the "incidental" exposure to asphalt.
- Cllr Linda Brown expressed concern about the close proximity to the cycle track.
- Cllr Jones asked about release of odour during transportation. This was countered by the assurance that all HGVs would be sealed and no odour would be noticeable.

- Cllr Walters asked about the use of masks during the production process. In reply it was explained that the production process was nearly all automated so operators would not be required. However, when masks were used, it was purely for protection against dust.
- Cllr Sanderson asked about the treatment of water on the site. In reply, it was confirmed that surface water will be directed by sloping to a single holding tank where silt and petroleum can be removed prior to discharge into the Medina. Sewerage will be dealt with by the Klargestor system.
- Cllr Jones asked whether the approval of the planning application was crucial to the success of the PFI contract. It was stressed that they were independent issues. The IW Council expects that the winner of the contract will fulfil its contractual obligations.
- The arrangement with PD Port Services and the ownership of the sea-borne vessels was discussed. Eurovia was ready to exchange contracts once permission was granted. They expect that some barges will be chartered. They are confident that there will be no access problems.
- Cllr Mazillius felt that it would have been more helpful to have given more details of working hours during the initial 7 years, which will be the busiest period. Mr Riley said, whilst he had no wish to be evasive, the nature of the PFI contract meant that supply and delivery was governed by the demand of the laying teams.
- In response to a question from Cllr Banks, it was explained that 210 tonnes of asphalt could be stored and that foundation material could be stored for 10-12 hours and top dressing material up to 4 hours. Mr Marsh confirmed that the application was for the plant to be a permanent site.
- Cllr Sanderson asked how long it would take to build the plant. No time scale was given however it was felt that the groundwork will take much longer than the erection of what will be mostly sectional plant. The use of the Phoenix Transworld Roadstar 2000 plant was confirmed.
- Mr Riley confirmed that 14 permanent staff will be employed plus ground workers.
- Cllr Matthews asked whether consideration of exiting via Stag Lane had been considered; Mr Marsh responded that it had raised too many land ownership issues and had been discounted.
- Cllr Sanderson also asked about composition of the exhaust emitted via the chimney. Mr Riley stated that only gases from the burning of natural gas and steam were released into the atmosphere; it will be odourless.

- Cllr Matthews asked what contingency plans, in relation to the PFI contract, were in place should the application be refused. Mr Marsh responded that he was confident that an asphalt plant would be built on the site but not necessarily as submitted in the original application; he recognised that there were hurdles to jump – but he commented that he had a 100% track record of success in getting planning approvals from Local Authorities for asphalt plants. He would not be drawn on whether this 100% success related to just one previous application or many applications.

These notes are intended only as a record of the informal meeting held and are not subject to any approval process.